

What is claimed is:

1. A method for automated processing of a search list provided by a remote user, and retrieving and delivering information corresponding to at least one item contained in said search list, comprising the steps of:

(A) receiving, onto a central server that services a plurality of remote users, a search list provided by the user, said search list comprising at least one item;

(B) forming a query at the central server based on the search list;

(C) periodically performing the following steps:

(i) initiating, from the central server, a search using the query on two or more information sources on the World Wide Web in order to locate information corresponding to each of said at least one item;

(ii) retrieving, with the central server, said information;

(iii) formatting said information into a common format using the central server;

(iv) ascertaining whether said information is current by comparing said information in the common format to information stored in a storage database in the common format, wherein the information stored in the database corresponds to results of previous searches using the query; and

(v) after step (iv), electronically delivering, using said central server, only said information ascertained to be current to the remote user.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of initiating is performed automatically.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said search list may be selectively edited by said user at any time.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the selection of said two or more information sources to be searched are determined by said user and may be selectively edited by said user at any time.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein each of said two or more information sources to be searched are determined independently by said user for each of said at least one item.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of initiating is performed at predetermined time intervals determined by said user, said predetermined time intervals capable of being selectively edited by said user at any time.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of electronically delivering is automatically performed via electronic mail.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein each of said at least one item corresponds to a distinct company.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein each of said at least one item corresponds to a distinct industry

10. The method of claim 1, wherein each of said at least one item corresponds to a distinct job format.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein said two or more information sources are public search engines.

12. A system for automated processing of a search list provided by a remote user, and retrieving and delivering information corresponding to at least one item contained in said search list, comprising:

a storage database that stores information in a common format, wherein information stored in the database corresponds to results of previous searches using a query; and

a central server that receives a search list provided by the user and comprising at least one item, services a plurality of remote users, forms the query based on the search list, and periodically initiates a search using the query on two or more information sources on the World Wide Web in order to locate information corresponding to each of said at least one item, retrieves said information, formats said information into a common format, ascertains whether said information is current by comparing said information in the common format to said information stored in said database in the common format, and electronically delivers only said information ascertained to be current to the remote user.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein said central server periodically initiates the searches automatically.

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14. The system of claim 12, wherein said search list may be selectively edited by said user at any time.

15. The system of claim 12, wherein the selection of said two or more information sources to be searched are determined by said user and may be selectively edited by said user at any time.

16. The system of claim 12, wherein each of said two or more information sources to be searched are determined independently by said user for each of said at least one item.

17. The system of claim 12, wherein said central server periodically initiates the searches at predetermined time intervals determined by said user, said predetermined time intervals capable of being selectively edited by said user at any time.

18. The system of claim 12, wherein said central server electronically delivers said information via an electronic mail system.

19. The system of claim 12, wherein each of said at least one item corresponds to a distinct company.

20. The system of claim 12, wherein each of said at least one item corresponds to a distinct industry

21. The system of claim 12, wherein each of said at least one item corresponds to a distinct job format.

22. The system of claim 12, wherein said two or more information sources are public search engines.

23. A computer-readable medium tangibly embodying instructions which, when executed by a computer, implement a process comprising the steps of:

(A) receiving, onto a central server that services a plurality of remote users, a search list provided by the user, said search list comprising at least one item;

(B) forming a query at the central server based on the search list;

(C) periodically performing the following steps:

(i) initiating, from the central server, a search using the query on two or more information sources on the World Wide Web in order to locate information corresponding to each of said at least one item;

(ii) retrieving, with the central server, said information;

(iii) formatting said information into a common format using the central server;

(iv) ascertaining whether said information is current by comparing said information in the common format to information stored in a storage database in the common format, wherein the information stored in the database corresponds to results of previous searches using the query; and

(v) after step (iv), electronically delivering, using said central server, only said information ascertained to be current to the remote user.

24. A method for ascertaining whether information retrieved from the World Wide Web is current, comprising the steps of:

(A) initiating, from a central server, a search using a query on at least one information source on the World Wide Web in order to locate information corresponding to at least one item from which the query is based;

(B) retrieving, with the central server, a portion of said information;

(C) composing, on the central server, a hash of said portion; and

(D) ascertaining whether said information is current by comparing said hash to hashes stored in a storage database, wherein the hashes stored in the database corresponds to results of previous searches using the query.

25. A method for converting a document from one extensible markup language (XML) format to another XML format, comprising the steps of:

(A) retrieving, with a central server, a first document in a first input XML format, wherein said first document in said first input XML format is coded with a first document type definition (DTD);

(B) converting said first document from said first input XML format to another XML format using only information derived from said first DTD;

(C) retrieving, with said central server, a second document in a second input XML format different from said first input XML format, wherein said second document in said second input XML format is coded with a second DTD different from said first DTD; and

(D) converting said second document from said second input XML format to said another XML format using only information derived from said second DTD.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein said another XML format is a web distributed data exchange (WDDX) format.

27. A method for processing of a search list provided by a remote user, and retrieving information corresponding to at least one item contained in said search list, comprising the steps of:

(A) receiving, onto a central server that services a plurality of remote users, a search list provided by the user, said search list comprising at least one item;

(B) forming a query at the central server based on the search list;

(C) initiating, from the central server, a search using the query on at least one information source on the World Wide Web in order to locate information corresponding to each of said at least one item; and

(D) retrieving, with the central server, said information;

wherein said central server comprises at least two local servers such that said at least two local servers function as a single virtual server, wherein each of said at least two servers are located in different locations from one another, each of said at least two servers capable of simultaneously retrieving different portions of said information.

28. A method for automatically suspending the electronic delivery of information to electronic mail destinations having invalid electronic mail addresses, comprising the steps of:

(A) attempting to electronically deliver information in the form of a message on a periodic basis from a server to an electronic mail destination using an electronic mail address corresponding to said electronic mail destination;

(B) receiving a reply message in response to the attempted delivery of said message in step (A) when said electronic delivery of said message is unsuccessful;

(C) extracting said electronic mail address from said reply message;

(D) change the status of said electronic mail address from valid to invalid after a predetermined number of reply messages are received corresponding to the same electronic mail address; and

(E) suspending the electronic delivery of information to said electronic mail destination when the status of said electronic mail address is held invalid.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein said reply message is a copy of said message attempted to be delivered in step (A).

30. The method of claim 28, wherein said reply message includes therein a statement indicating that said delivery of said message attempted in step (A) was unsuccessful.

31. A system for ascertaining whether information retrieved from the World Wide Web is current, comprising:



a storage database that stores hashes, wherein hashes stored in the database correspond to results of previous searches using a query;

a central server that initiates a search using the query on at least one information source on the World Wide Web in order to locate information corresponding to at least one item from which the query is based, retrieves a portion of said information, composes a hash of said portion, and ascertains whether said information is current by comparing said composed hash to the hashes stored in the database.

32. A system for converting a document from one extensible markup language (XML) format to another XML format, comprising:

a central server that retrieves a first document in a first input XML format, wherein said first document in said first input XML format is coded with a first document type definition (DTD), said central server converts said first document from said first input XML format to another XML format using only information derived from said first DTD, said central server retrieves a second document in a second input XML format different from said first input XML format, wherein said second document in said second input XML format is coded with a second DTD different from said first DTD, said central server converts said second document from said second input XML format to said another XML format using only information derived from said second DTD.

33. The system of claim 32, wherein said another XML format is a web distributed data exchange (WDDX) format.

34. A system for processing of a search list provided by a remote user, and retrieving information corresponding to at least one item contained in said search list, comprising:

a central server that receives a search list provided by the user and comprising at least one item, services a plurality of remote users, forms a query based on the search list, initiates a search using the query on at least one information source on the World Wide Web in order to locate information corresponding to each of said at least one item, and retrieves said information;

wherein said central server comprises at least two local servers such that said at least two local servers function as a single virtual server, wherein each of said at least two servers are located in different locations from one another, each of said at least two servers capable of simultaneously retrieving different portions of said information.

35. A system for automatically suspending the electronic delivery of information to electronic mail destinations having invalid electronic mail addresses, comprising:

a server that attempts to electronically deliver information in the form of a message on a periodic basis to an electronic mail destination using an electronic mail address corresponding to said electronic mail destination, receives a reply message in response to the attempted delivery of said message when said electronic delivery of said message is unsuccessful, extracts said electronic mail address from said reply message, changes the status of said electronic mail address from valid to invalid after a predetermined number of reply messages are received corresponding to the same electronic mail address, and suspends the electronic delivery of information to said electronic mail destination when the status of said electronic mail address is held invalid.

36. The system of claim 35, wherein said reply message is a copy of said message attempted to be delivered.

37. The system of claim 35, wherein said reply message includes therein a statement indicating that said delivery of said message was unsuccessful.